



## Iowa Department of Public Health Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

### Tobacco- Free/Nicotine-Free Fairs and Exhibitions

Each year in Iowa, many fairs and exhibitions take place throughout the summer months. This fact sheet has been developed to provide guidance to county fair boards and exhibition fair planners as they consider voluntary policy updates.

By law, each county fair board has responsibility for all policies, including tobacco and nicotine usage policies governing its fair, grounds, exhibitions, and camping areas. For a current list of county fairs and exhibitions [Click here](#).

County extension offices assist county fair boards with planning and coordinating their fairs, but do not govern or set policy for fair boards. County fairs are normally held between June and September and include youth 4-H /FFA livestock and static (stationary) exhibits. Residents of the county also participate in contests and open-class judging events which often draws a lot of the public for these competitions. Frequently, the fairs also provide family entertainment like amusement rides, arcades, good food and live music. Some county fair boards own their own grounds, while others lease grounds for their fairs and exhibitions.

The county fair should be an event that the whole community can enjoy. Allowing tobacco and nicotine use at a fair may prevent children, families, the elderly, and people with respiratory or other medical conditions from experiencing the full fun that a county fair offers.

Creating a tobacco- free/nicotine-free county fair or exhibition:

- 1) **Work with Youth Organizations.** Youth who are involved in groups like 4-H and the National organization of Future Farmers of America, now called (FFA) are often at the fair for many hours each day—sometimes even overnight—and may have a high interest in helping you get a tobacco-free/nicotine-free policy passed.
- 2) **Create Your Request.** Think about whether you would like the entire fairgrounds to be free of tobacco/nicotine use, and/or free of tobacco sponsorship. Keep in mind that if your fair also has a rodeo, the rodeo may have tobacco sponsorship. Discuss enforcement and who will be the designated party or board to enforce the policy.
- 3) **Build Community Support.** Since the fair is for the entire community to enjoy, ask community members to show their support for a tobacco-free/nicotine-free fair by writing letters of support or signing a petition.
- 4) **Talk to the Fair Board.** Contact the fair board to find out if you can attend a board meeting. Decisions about the fair are often made months in advance of the fair, so meet with the board early. Share the facts about the dangers of secondhand smoke, spit tobacco and nicotine product usage. Explain the many benefits of being tobacco free/nicotine-free and share that many fairs and exhibitions across the country are also working on this issue.

- 5) **Hold a Tobacco-Free/Nicotine-Free Day.** Some fairs may not be ready to adopt a comprehensive tobacco-free/nicotine-free policy right away. If they are not, suggest wording that will fit their needs for this event, for example, (start with including tobacco-free this year and next year add nicotine-free into the policy). Ask the fair to go tobacco free/nicotine-free for a day so they can see the benefits for themselves. Fairs often have special days like Kids Day, Family Day, or Safety and Health Day that would be a natural fit to have a tobacco-free/nicotine-free day. Be sure to publicize the fair's tobacco-free/nicotine-free day and collect visitor comments to show the fair board the community's reactions.
- 6) **Help Create a Policy.** Once a fair has decided to go tobacco-free/nicotine-free, encourage them to write a tobacco-free/nicotine-free policy. Written policies provide documentation that the fair is actually tobacco free/nicotine-free. Remember to include in the county fair rule book the policy and effective date. See a sample policy for 'outdoor places and events' below.
- 7) **Provide Signage.** Permanent signs are great ways to let visitors know that they are entering a tobacco-free/nicotine-free environment. Temporary signs for high traffic areas will also increase visibility and awareness.
- 8) **Celebrate!** There are very few tobacco-free/nicotine-free fairs in Iowa, and your county fair has just done an amazing service for the community! Letting the community know the fair is tobacco – free/nicotine-free will help attract more visitors and help to educate the public. Make an announcement in your local newspaper or on your local radio/TV station, put an announcement on social media, put up flyers in businesses, daycares, and schools. You can also set up a booth during your event to help celebrate your community's first annual tobacco-free/nicotine-free fair or exhibition.
- 9) **Don't Forget the Web.** If the fair has a web site, encourage them to post an announcement that they are tobacco-free/nicotine-free on the home page.
- 10) **Congratulate the Fair.** Take out an ad or write a letter-to-the-editor to thank the fair for protecting the health of its visitors, employees, and the community.
- 11) **If the board decides not to implement policy.**  
Do follow-up in another year as county fair board's change membership.

**Suggested policy for outdoor places and events such as county fairs, exhibitions and sponsorships:**

### ***Tobacco-Free/Nicotine- Free Policy guidelines for use with Outdoor Places and Events***

#### **Fact and Purpose:**

The *(name of event)* finds that:

- a) Tobacco/nicotine use in the proximity of children and adults engaging in or watching outdoor activities is detrimental to their health and can be dangerous to those using such facilities; and
- b) This event is a unique opportunity to create and sustain an environment that supports a non-tobacco and non-nicotine norm through a tobacco-free/nicotine-free policy, rule enforcement, and adult-peer role modeling during; and
- c) Parents, leaders, and officials involved in community events are role models for youth and can have a positive effect on the lifestyle choices they make; and
- d) The tobacco industry advertises at and sponsors events to foster a connection between tobacco use and community events; and

- e) Tobacco/nicotine products (extends to all types of tobacco and nicotine products), once consumed in public spaces, are often discarded on the ground requiring additional maintenance expenses, diminish the beauty of outdoor facilities, and pose a risk to toddlers, pets and exhibition animals due to ingestion; and
- f) The prohibition of tobacco and nicotine use at all times will serve to protect the health, safety and welfare of the participants and all attending.

**Policy:**

Tobacco and nicotine use is prohibited in event areas.

This tobacco/nicotine policy applies to all employees, independent contractors, board members, participants in events, and the general public while in attendance. During this outdoor event the use of tobacco and nicotine is prohibited in these areas: *[list applicable areas such as all vendor areas, restrooms, concession areas, walk ways, performance areas, buildings and their entrances]*

**Enforcement:**

- a) Appropriate signs shall be posted in the above specified areas.
- b) The community, especially event attendees and staff, will be notified about this policy.
- c) It is the responsibility of the board members or there designee to provide enforcement.
- d) Any person found violating this policy will be asked to refrain from tobacco and nicotine use or risk immediate ejection from the event grounds for the remainder of the event.
- e) If the violator refuses to leave, the staff may contact local authorities.

**Effective Date:**

This policy statement is effective immediately upon the date of adoption.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Appropriate Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

For information on Iowa county fairs and exhibitions go to the "Association of Iowa Fairs" website @ <http://www.iowafairs.com/site/aif-aboutus.php>

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